

# I Won't Let Go

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Inspired by predictions for Episode 21. Gamagoori is faced with the singular event he never, ever wanted to see unfold before his eyes. The one thing he feared would happen. The one mistake that was doomed to come. Blood flies, fears arise, and a body falls to the ground as he comes to realize that letting it go would never happen.

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[Introduction](#)

[I Won't Let Go](#)

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***Don't hurt me! Don't hurt me, don't hurt me! I had this idea while I was freaking out over the predictions for the next episode!***

***You people on Tumblr know them... I won't spoiler, but I have to put up the one warning NONE OF US WANT.***

***WARNING: Major Character Death is involved in this fic. Good luck and thank you for deciding to read my fanfiction.***

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Running. Leaping, dodging, flipping, moving, her hands up in defiance to their fighting. She was a fool to try to intervene with this fight. She couldn't hold back however as her friend had been taken control of by her hate-filled mother. She wanted her friend back. She could bring her back, she told him as he asked her not to run out there like a fool. She could bring Mako and fix all of this, she yelled at him as she ran out of protection.

She was wrong. She was wrong. Wrong, wrong, wrong. He knew as he watched in horror as Ryuuko did not react to Mako's appearance, rose her blade and brought it down, stabbing the Scissor Blade through Mako's chest.

He was moving. Satsuki was freezing. Ryuuko was sneering. The ship silenced to a gasp of horror and disbelief. Noise and time meant nothing to him as he screamed out for Mako, who looked down at the embedded weapon in confusion. She couldn't believe it either.

The blade was brought out of her and aimed back at Satsuki, who fought the attacks now aimed at her. She ignored Mako. She barely realized and recognized who she had just stabbed. Satsuki was hollering something toward him, but he barely heard it. Bit of pieces of other screams came to him.

*'No, Mako, Mankanshoku, save, hurt, blood'*

*'Death. Death. Injury, blood, wound, death. Dead'*

She was not dead. She could not be dead.

"GET HER OUT OF THERE GAMAGOORI!" he finally heard Satsuki's orders. He would follow them. He already was, before she had even given them. He was at Mako now. She was spread out on the ground in a small collected puddle of her own blood, gasping and grasping at the hole in her chest. Blood decorated her body and face like misplaced cherry blossoms. Her fingers dug into the wound, but she gave no indication that she was in pain. Her eyes seemed to stare into nothing. She couldn't believe still that she was hurt by her best friend. He couldn't believe that she was in such a situation now, faced with such pain.

She was lighter than he hoped as he collected her up, clutching her to his chest like a glass doll. Her heart; he could hear it. It barely made sound against him. It was weak and soft, barely beating. It was dying. It was slowly disappearing from her as it desperately tried to continue on.

She would not die now. She would never die here. Not now. Not now.

He was moving out of sight of the attacks, explosion, and fighting. Out of sight of the devastation that caused Mako's injury. She was having trouble breathing. Having trouble staying awake. She couldn't hear the cries of her family as he walked in with her. Her father went from horrified to attempting to help in to time flat as he had Gamagoori lay Mako down on their bed in their room. Her mother was trying to help as best she could, bringing supplies but she was in tears and hysterics. Worse than watching her daughter be swallowed by a COVER suit. Worse than anything he imagined. Her brother, Mataro, was crying and trying to keep it together for the sake of his family. He kept the flow of supplies and towels as best he could muster.

Gamagoori was slowly unraveling but he held fast. He would hold for her. He had to keep together for her.

Her eyes opened as her father tore her uniform top to get to her wound. She was gasping out in pain, her hands digging into the bed beneath her. The sheets were turning red and pink as her wound spilled out her precious blood. Spit dribbled down her chin. Blood dabbed out of her nose. Her body was shuddering and in spasm. Yet through it all her eyes were on him. On Gamagoori. On her rescuer.

"Gamagoori"

His attention was directly on her. She was smiling. She was smiling even though tears fell from her eyes. She looked *happy* even though she was badly hurt. Her left arm was moving, her hand reaching up to him as he moved next to her. Her hand was soft even though it was coated in blood. Her fingers seemed to wipe away all other thought besides her.

"Y-you saved me again..."

His voice was barely there. It was whispery, watery, and wobbly. But she was speaking to him. Not to her family who was working as quickly as possible to help and save her. Not to her brother who sobbed for her and ran for supplies like a monkey. She was talking to Gamagoori. Touching him, looking at him, smiling up at him.

He cupped the bloodied hand on his face, leaning into the warm touch. It was warmth he cherished as the temperature in the room dropped. Her fingers twitched against him, tickling him with each little stroke of his face

"Yes" his own voice was not stable. It warbled, as if he were on the verge of tears. Her smile widened.

"Th-thank you..." Her tears fell faster, harder, and stronger. Her smile faded and was replaced by fear. That look faded and her happiness

returned again. She moved her hand so she could curl it tightly around his. They were holding hands. His face brightened but at the same time dropped as her eyes seemed to go unfocused. She blinked multiple times. Her hand shook in his. He squeezed it, willing it to calm in his grip.

He could faintly hear her father scream for anything to help staunch the wound, for something large or thick enough to help stop her bleeding. Gamagoori couldn't move. He couldn't breathe. His vision blurred. His tears gathered. Mako's smile came strong again as her body was taken hold of by shaking.

Her last breath. Her last words. Her last smile. It was to him.

"Don't let go. Don't let me go"

The light behind her eyes disappeared. The life behind her smile faded. Her body stilled. Her arm and hand went limp. He did not let go. He did not believe it. He called her name, once, twice, thrice, but no response. He took hold of the bloodied hand with both of his, squeezing them to get a response, a shake, anything. He did not want her to leave.

But he got nothing. All he had left was the emotion left in her eyes as she passed. Her head lolled slightly to the left. Her body stopped moving completely. One last breath, and she was gone. Her father realized it too, and backed away with a choked down sob. Her family knew.

His tears fell. They fell like stinging rain, burning down his face. Her heart seized and sobbed as he did. It could not be. But as he sat there beside the bloody deathbed holding the hand of the only person he had learned to love since middle school, he realized that it was true. It was cruel truth. He failed to keep her alive.

Mako had died beside him. She was dead. She died talking to him, thanking him for his service to her.

She died holding hands with him.

He sobbed aloud, pressing the hand he held till her death to his forehead. He barely heard her family's mourning behind him. He could barely hear the fight outside on the deck. He barely heard his own heart beating over its shrieks of pain over her death.

He heard Mako's last words. He heard the smile in her voice. The light he knew that came from everything she did.

He would not let go. He would never let her go. He would stay right there.

"I refuse... to let go... Mako. I won't... let... you... go"

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Seconds. Minutes, hours. Time blurred. He did not care. He did not move. He did not eat. He barely slept, and when he did, his terrors and nightmares roused him awake. Tears fell. His heart throbbed painfully in his chest. His mind shrieked at him the disasters that took place. His back pleaded for a break. Her arms moaned for a chance to relax down at his sides. His eyes begged to stop crying.

He did not listen to any of it.

He had never let go. He never would let go. She meant too much to him now.

The door to the room opened with a loud creak. He ignored it. His hand tightened around hers. No response as usual.

"Gamagoori"

He was seated up against the bed, alone in the darkness of the room. He had his back against the bed, seated with one knee up. His head was bent down, his now unkempt hair falling over his shadowed eyes and face. He was still as a board for a moment before a chill came over him, shaking his body.

"Gamagoori look at me"

His head lifted just enough for his red-rimmed eyes to catch Satsuki's eyes. She closed the door behind her softly, a sliver of light from the hallway peaking in from the hallway. She stopped a few feet from him. He knew she saw the obvious signs of weakness and the tears that now fell without words or sounds. She saw how he looked completely resigned and defenseless. The part of him that knew he should shape up yelled and hollered for attention.

He ignored it. He squeezed her hand again.

She saw then where his left hand went. Where it held on to Mako's hand. She gasped softly as she realized what had happened, and her gaze came back to Gamagoori.

She knelt in front of him, drawing a smidgen more of his attention. She could see a little more of the hidden features of his face. She looked at the tears with a neutral expression, the previously shed ones that left trails down his face and the ones falling now, and the obvious defeat in his body, the slack in his expression. The lack of determination and fire in his eyes. She noticed how drained he was, the obvious strain of emotional hurt evident on everything she saw and speculated.

"You need to get up Gamagoori" she told him, "She would want you to stand strong"

"She asked me to not let go"

Satsuki arched an eyebrow quizzically. She looked at the sudden movement in her peripheral. His hand, still wrapped around one of Mako's hands, coated in dried blood, tightened. She could see his fingers pull taut around the limb.

"I won't leave her side. She asked me to stay"



Satsuki gave a soft sigh, one not disapproving but not one of complete acceptance of this decision. She was, admittedly, hurt a smudge by the news of Mako's death and passing. She came out into the battlefield with intentions to help and save her best friend, but instead found a fatal chest wound and death's arms waiting for her by the end. She could not, however, feel the pain and sorrow Gamagoori felt now. She would have no clue unless...

"Stay by her side then, Gamagoori. Do not forget her. Your devotion to her is commendable, and should stay that way"

His eyes were on Satsuki as she stood, brushed off the dirt on her knees and on Senketsu, and calmly walked out again without another word. The door calmly shut and plunged him into darkness once more. Lady Satsuki's words rang around him like bells.

*'Your devotion to her is commendable... stay by her side, then...'*

He shuddered, tears falling once again. He numbly interlaced his fingers into Mako's hand. He covered his mouth as his shaking continued, trying to hold back his voice. The cries clawed at his throat until they were swallowed down again.

*'Do not forget her...'*

He would never forget her. He would never let her memory go. Mako Mankanshoku would forever hold a place in his thoughts, in his memories. He would keep his promise in never letting her go.

She would always live on in his heart.